

To Parents of Students at Sidcot School

14 March 2020

Dear Parent

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

In light of the developing world-wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic I wanted to provide an update for parents on the evolving situation with regard to Coronavirus.

On Thursday, the Government, through Public Health England (PHE), updated its advice to all. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection. However, PHE's key messages are:

- If you have symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started. This action will help protect others in your community whilst you are infectious.
- Plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure that you can successfully stay at home.
- Stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away from other people in your home whenever possible.
- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water.
- Stay away from vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions as much as possible.
- You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days contact NHS 111 online. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

This advice is intended for people with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), including those with a diagnosis of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, who must remain at home until they are well.

In light of the above advice if your child develops symptoms **please do not send them to school for at least 7 days from the first day**. So that we can ensure the safety of all our students please

continue to contact school reception to report your child's absence, simply advising us that they are in self isolation, on 01934 843102 or reception@sidcot.org.uk.

As of today, there are no known positive COVID-19 cases in our Sidcot School community. If this situation arises, we will follow Public Health England advice on how to manage the school at the time and will advise you and your child accordingly.

In the meantime, we have the following measures in place:

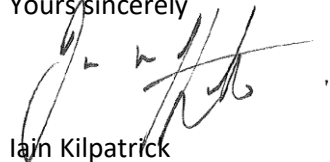
- **Hygiene** - Increased cleaning and sanitising is taking place around the campus during and after the school day using appropriate disinfectant. This includes areas most commonly touched such as desks and furniture, door handles and stair banisters. Toilets are being cleaned regularly and soap is being replenished. Staff are reminding students of the importance of handwashing for 20 seconds with soap. Please help us with this by reminding your son or daughter to respect basic personal hygiene including coughs and sneezes - catch it, bin it, kill it!
- **School Closure** - Following the Government update, an instruction to close schools does not appear to be imminent, but could happen in the future as part of the "delay stage" of the virus management response. If it arises, a closure notice may come at short notice and, if you have not done so already, we ask you to think about your preparations if this eventuality arises. To help us to be able to communicate effectively with you as a parent, please can we remind you to update us if your contact details have changed: mobile phone or email address. You can do this via school reception.
- **Communication** – In the event of a school closure, we will be communicating with students via their **school email address**. We are unable to communicate via other personal email addresses or messaging apps for reasons of safeguarding and data protection. Students should make sure that they know their log-in details before they leave school to return home.
- **Remote Working** - As I have previously advised, we are working on contingencies to deliver learning opportunities to students during a period of closure, using online platforms including FireFly, Microsoft TEAMS and MS OneNote as well as activities that will not require use of IT equipment in the home. Our priority is to support students in Years 13 and 11 as they prepare for the summer exams. Staff are currently working on these plans and resources as well as continuing to deliver teaching at this time.
- **Public Examinations** – For any students who are studying the IB Diploma, we have been notified that they may take their examinations at an IB school in their own country, providing that the school is willing to accept them. If you feel that you need to take advantage of this it will be the responsibility of either parents or agents to make such arrangements. At this point, Examination Boards in the UK for GCSE and A Level have yet to advise about any alternative provision. The default position is for students to carry on studying in order to prepare for these exams in the summer.

- **Overseas Trips** – As the Government has advised against overseas trips, we have cancelled the ski trip due to take place at the end of this term and will be in a position to refund all monies paid by parents through insurance. We will contact the relevant parents directly over the course of next week. All other planned trips will remain under review.
- **Face Masks** – we respect the cultural differences with regard to wearing face masks. We feel that if you son or daughter feels safer by wearing a mask, then this will be permitted on school site

I appreciate that this is an anxious time, but hope you feel re-assured by the measures we have put in place. We will advise you of any changes as soon as we are able to.

Should parents have any further concerns at this stage, please do not hesitate to make contact through the usual channels.

Yours sincerely



Iain Kilpatrick
Headmaster